

CHARLOTTE MILLS

Digest of

"My Own Story of My Mother's Love and Murder"
which appeared daily in the Evening Graphic
(New York Tabloid) between September 1, 1926
and September 22, 1926, both inclusive, as
written by Charlotte Mills.

FIRST INSTALMENT
September 1, 1926.

Mrs. Mills, after supper on September 14, 1922, went out,
saying to Charlotte

"Wait for me, kid, till I come back." (Bottom 1st Col. Page 3)

Charlotte didn't wait but left the house before her mother
came back and left a second time.

Charlotte wonders if she "could have kept anything from
happening if I had waited" (Bottom 1st Col. Top 2nd Col. Page 3)

Mrs. Mills told Charlotte many years later "that even at
that time (when Charlotte was four years old) she was discouraged and
felt tied down and hemmed in and her marriage had been a terrible
blunder". (Bottom 2nd Col. Page 3)

Whole tone of Article in this issue in favor of mother
though nothing derogatory to her father.

SECOND INSTALMENT
September 2, 1926.

Mother came of poor family which was brought up sternly.
Crazy about music, wasn't happy at home (Bottom half 1st Col. Page 4).

Met Jim Mills when 15, married at 16 and did it on impulse,
as a way out (Bottom 1st Col. Top 2nd Col. Page 4).

Mother told Charlotte

"Listen kid, never do what I did. Think what you are about. Keep a head on you. Look into the future and when you marry, marry a man who feels the same way you do about things. Promise me". (1st Paragraph, 2nd Col. Page 4).

Mother spoiled Charlotte a lot (2nd Co. Page 4)

Mother would make apple dumplings and treat Mr. Hall (Bottom 4th Col. Page 4).

THIRD INSTALMENT
September 3, 1926.

About time Charlotte was ten years old (1916) things at home were happier. Mother was singing in choir (middle 1st Col. Page 4)

"Anything to save a dollar here and there. Money was always our trouble. It caused more quarrels in our family than anything else."

"Anything else except animals. I was wild about cats and was always dragging home some scrawny kitten. Poor mother nearly had a fit."

"Any kind of an animal made me happy. My father used to shoot squirrels and once I got hold of one and sneaked it into bed with me". Squirrel was dead, etc. (Bottom 1st Col. Page 4).

"Mother worked in church before Mr. Hall came and there after harder than ever" (Middle Col. 2 Page 4)

Mr. Hall fond of children and they of him. Relation of his kind acts towards children.

FOURTH INSTALMENT
September 4, 1926.

"I used to have strange feelings about my father. I don't blame father for not making money. People have to be as they are I suppose. But I used to wonder why he had so little education. Schools were free. You could always study and read and find out things if you worked at it. Mother did." (1st Paragraph 1st Col. Page 3).

Praise of mother.

"Things at our house got worse or at least they seemed worse to me, perhaps because I was getting old enough to realize how badly off we were and how hopeless everything was".

"My father was a shoe cutter and he had been working in a shoe factory in New Brunswick. It moved to Brooklyn and they wanted father to go along. He would have gone but mother didn't want to leave New Brunswick. It was her home she said and her family were there and all her friends". * * * "She told father he could go to Brooklyn and she and I would stay in New Brunswick and he could come out and see us when he wanted to."

"Father wouldn't go without us. I really think it was my brother Dan more than mother and me. He has always cared tremendously for Dan and so have all the Mills family. Perhaps Dan is more like them and mother and I are like the Reinhardts. Anyway we never could get along very well with the Millses". * * * "She never had chance to be happy, mother didn't. Just housework and being poor and father having no ambition or ideals or anything she cared for" * * * She used to beg me not to marry anybody until I was sure I loved him and he was the right kind of man."

"Be something kid, she used to say "have some kind of a life; don't live as I have had to." * * * * "Every once in a while mother would get an idea and try to fix the house up a little better. But always there wasn't money enough to buy anything. Father couldn't see why we wanted anything. Mother and I would go window shopping together.

"One day we saw a framed picture. It is the picture you often see, I think it is by a famous painter. It shows a little boy lying on his back on a hillside shading his eyes with one hand and looking straight up into the sky, dreaming.

" 'That is just Like Mr. Hall' mother told me. 'He has described how he used to try to think things out when he was a boy on a farm. He tried to think out what life was all about and how he would ~~ever~~ get things for his two sisters and his mother for he didn't earn much and they wanted a great many things.'

"Mother bought that picture on part payment and when she owned it all she give it to Mr. Hall. He hung it up in his study at the church and said it was exactly like his own boyhood and took him back. Later on he thought it best not to keep it there so he gave it back to mother and she kept it in our room. I have it now.

"Mother and I had one room and my father and Dan another. Dad's bed wasn't comfortable so mother and I went out to buy a new one. The stores charged so much that we had to buy the bed on instalments. I'll never forget the day they delivered it with the mattress and everything. Mother and I hid it in the garret and didn't dare bring it down

till it was all paid for for fear of what father would say. We knew from experience. It was always trouble, trouble, trouble about money.

"We used to get sick over the quarrels.

"Once we had an awful time over a wicker chair. The chairs in our parlor were old and rickety. Mother and I saw a wicker chair in a store window and wanted to buy it but mother didn't have enough even to pay an instalment.

"Well anyhow mother saved enough out of the housekeeping money to make a payment and we got the chair home. When it was paid for at last we brought it down and then the heavens pretty nearly fell.

"That night mother and I went over to the church and slept in Mr. Hall's study in two chairs. Even mother and I got quarreling. She wanted me to sleep in the big/comfortable chair and I wanted her to take it. We ended up by her sleeping in the big chair half the night and I the other half.

"That wasn't the last time we did that. We did it a good many times whenever there were bad ruspuses at home and we couldn't bear to stay there under that roof. "

FIFTH INSTALMENT
September 8, 1926.

"I hope I haven't given a wrong impression of my father or spoken disrespectfully. I have had one or two whippings from mother because I was pert to father. We somehow never seemed to 'belong' my father and me, and mother understood; but all the same she had the old-fashioned German idea that a child must be respectful to parents and whenever I was naughty in that way I suffered for it.

'He is your father,' she'd say, 'and if you can't be anything better, you can be obedient and silent.'

"All the same, she and I had our battles with him. Mostly over money affairs. I can't remember any time in my life that we weren't worrying over the lack of money. That is, mother and I worried, father was very easygoing. He just seemed to live inside of himself and didn't care very much about anything. It's his way. Mother used to flare up sometimes, but she wouldn't let me.

I read a story in a newspaper lately that said mother used to make terrible scenes and 'throw pieces of bric-a-brac', and even strike my father. How terrible to write such lies about her! Never any such thing happened in all my lifetime. They had their squabbles, but, as for hitting and throwing things - well, it is shameful to say so.

"The Mills men are peculiar, or so they seem to me. They are very taciturn and don't care much about women; I mean, they feel superior to women just because they themselves happen to be men. I can't express myself very clearly about this, because I never get it

very clear to my own mind. I never could understand what difference it makes which sex you are. It's what you do in the world that counts, and, although I am only 20, I have seen a good many women who had more get up and get than their men folks. It's character that's what it is.

"People that have character get things done and are successful no matter how they are born or what advantages they have, or whether they are men or women. I can't see why any one should think a woman isn't as good as a man, or as useful, or whatever you choose to call it, or should think themselves superior to other people when character is the only thing that makes anybody superior.

"I guess I'd better cultivate character, for I'm certainly not very pretty." (Top of Col. 3, page 6, to end)

SIXTH INSTALMENT
September 9, 1926.

Mrs. Hall didn't have a way with children.

"I am sure she mean't to be nice and that she was very good and kind in her way. But she never got under your skin; always left you cold" (Top half Col. 2, page 10) * * *

"We were always half afraid of her. I think all the church people felt that way she was so distant and stiff and formal. She didn't mean to be patronizing I guess but we all felt we were being stooped down to. The only enthusiasm she every had was a sort of religious fervor." (Last paragraph, Col. 2, page 10).

"At home once in a while she would blurt out what she felt to father. And always once she knew she was right she would stick up for herself and you could not scare her into keeping still no matter what.

"In those days father used to complain about her going to the church so much. He'd ask why she couldn't let the other ladies do more of the work and not be running up there the whole time. Mother would always answer:

'The church is all I have got. It's my whole life and I won't give it up for anything or anybody. I shall go as often as I can.'

"But she never neglected her home. Only on Sundays after she began to sing in the choir she wouldn't get home till quite late because they had to go into the vestry to take off their surplices, and the choir singers were naturally later getting away than the congregation.

"Mother would always prepare the things for dinner before she went in the morning but she had to finish them up when she came back and it made dinner pretty late, around 3 o'clock sometimes.

"Dad didn't like that and said so. Then mother told him that if he couldn't wait that long he should put the gas on under the pots and pans himself and get dinner started. He did too. For a long time father got Sunday dinner, for himself that is, and would eat it and go out before mother was home.

"Father liked the Halls in a sort of way, especially Mr. Hall. Yet he always fussed at mother and me for having so much to do with them.

'They're high monkey-monks,' he would say, 'and you're not in their class and never will be. They don't want you around. I should think you could see she is trying to freeze you out. Have a little sense and stay out.'

"And mother would always say: 'That's because you don't understand them.'

"She always in those days stood up for Mrs. Hall and said that after you knew her as she (mother) thought she knew her, you came to like her.

"But once a very strange thing happened."

(Col. 3, 3rd paragraph, Page 10 to end).

SEVENTH INSTALMENT
September 10, 1926.

This instalment opens with some comparatively kind words about Mrs. Hall and the presents Mrs. Mills gave Mrs. Hall. Then it

relates the afternoon tea episode which happened about a year before her mother's death placing the occurrence at a small garden party. (Col. 1 page 24).

Mr. Hall brought Mrs. Mills, who looked like a ghost home. As soon as she got home Mrs. Mills was violently ill and was sick for three days. (Col.2 page 24)

Charlotte relates as follows:

"It seems that after Mrs. Hall had shown her around through the flower beds she invited her up on the porch and asked if she would like something to drink- iced tea or coffee, I think it was -- and mother said yes. She swallowed two or three sips, turned dead white, and dropped in a faint.

"They had a hard time bringing her to and when she got her senses again she had a feeling of death - that's what she told me after.

'Charlotte', she said, looking so queer, 'I never felt so awful in my life; a sort of cold sinking sensation, and black, like dying.'

"There was an odd look about mother for days - quiet and frightened, sort of, and dazed. We didn't know what to make of it all. Mr. Hall called up very often and came around two or three times the next day and the next, and Mrs. Hall telephoned I think.

"Even my dad had nothing to say for once. I thought he would say 'I told you so' or something like that, but I think he was too puzzled and upset to say anything.

"We all tried to put it out of our minds as soon as possible. Mother got all right at last and never spoke about it again after

she explained to me what had happened and how she felt. (Col.2 page 24 and Col. 3 page 24).

EIGHTH INSTALMENT
September 11, 1926.

About a year before Mrs. Mills' death Charlotte thought a good deal about the love of Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills. The more she thought the less it seemed wrong. Can't believe Mrs. Hall didn't know Mr. Hall didn't love her. She must have known.

Mr. Hall was forced into his marriage by his financial necessities. He knew he had made a mistake at once. Mrs. Mills was sorry for Mr. Hall, Mrs. Hall, etc.

NINTH INSTALMENT
September 12, 1926.

Much about the Mills piano which Charlotte loved to play. Mr. Hall would come to the house and sing. Mr. Hall gave Charlotte "The Family Music Book". Father took piano apart and put it together again.

Father always pretty serious but mother jolly.

Charlotte has snapshot of Mrs. Mills taken by Mr. Hall on shore just before she changed to her bathing suit.

TENTH INSTALMENT
September 13, 1926.

Mother worked in church years before Mr. Hall became the later Rector, and it was years/before Mr. Hall knew Mrs. Mills except to speak to in passing.

Charlotte was eight or nine when she first knew Mr. Hall

well. (This would be about 1915)

Great rejoicing in Mills family when Mr. Hall came home from trips.

"I don't think mother even heard any gossip about her and Mr. Hall; she never told me she did. Most of the church people just took it for granted they were warm friends" as she did so much Church work and sang in the choir.

Neither Mr. Hall nor Mrs. Mills smoked and her mother very rarely took a drink. Charlotte doesn't believe they used the Phillips house. Charlotte believes her mother intended to take her, leave home and wait for Mr. Hall to join her. "I can't help believing that before long if Mr. Hall had lived, he would have gone like a man and made a clean breast of the whole thing to his wife, telling her how he felt respect and friendship for her but not love and how he did feel love for someone else and that he would have asked her to let him go." (Bottom Col. 1, page 22).

ELEVENTH INSTALMENT
September 15, 1926.

After saying her mother was not ashamed of her love for Mr. Hall, Charlotte says

"Neither did she make a secret at home of her admiration and affection for Mr. Hall.

My father's attitude, so far as I could judge, was a curious one. His nature is peculiar; I never understood it very well; always wondered what was passing in his mind and why he did

certain things the way he did them. He might have seen it would lead to trouble.

"There were few actual quarrels between mother and father on the subject of the church or the pastor; the quarrels were usually about money or how we children were to be brought up. Mother insisted I should keep on at high school and father didn't think it necessary. He had to go to work as a young boy. He didn't see why we should do differently. What was good enough for him was good enough for us.

"Mother used to be wild about that. She used to say I should keep on at high school till I graduated and stay away from work that might bring in a few poor dollars a week even if she had to go out scrubbing or cooking in somebody's family to keep me there. And mother won. Mother always won. She was positive in character and couldn't be walked over.

"For years my parents were out of sympathy and almost like strangers. And yet that isn't quite true either for mother was a great stickler for our being respectful and obedient to father. She was fond of him I guess in a way. Anyhow she knew she owed him a certain kind of loyalty if nothing else and although they got terribly on each other's nerves and went their separate ways as much as possible, there weren't any real battles between them as has been ridiculously said in some newspaper stories, throwing plates and vases and hitting each other.

"I confess I saw mother's side better than father's. Mother and I thought alike about practically everything. I don't believe

father intended to be cruel but he must have felt mother's indifference and disappointment in him and her contempt for his lack of ambition and get-up-and-get and he liked to tease and annoy her sometimes. He has irritating ways of saying and doing things and if you asked him to stop, instead of seeing you aren't in any mood for silliness he goes right on till you're wild.

"If mother used to slap back sometimes, who can blame her? I certainly never did. There are limits to everyone's patience and endurance. I hated to see her flare up; but once or twice I have heard her turn on him in desperation and say:

" 'Why I would give more for Mr. Hall's little finger than for your whole body.'"

"And I couldn't feel as shocked as you might expect me to."

TWELFTH INSTALMENT
SEPTEMBER 16, 1926

"Mother went on a picnic with the Hall's on Wednesday, September 13, 1926 and took sandwiches.

"Mother still felt effects of operation and climbing to place for lunch gave her a pain around her heart and shortness of breath. Mr. Hall fixed up a place for Mrs. Mills to rest. Later she felt better and aided in passing sandwiches. She offered Mr. Hall one of his favorites, made of tuna fish. Then Charlotte says:

"Mrs. Hall looked at her (Mrs. Mills) very coldly and firmly and said: 'No, thank you, he won't care for it; we have brought plenty of sandwiches ourselves', xxxd mother told me that when she got home." (Top half Col. 2, page 10)

Note: No killing look such as Charlotte testified to at hearing. As a matter of fact I think Mr. Hall was on a diet.

Charlotte remembers kidney stew for supper on Thursday, September 14, 1922 and that she kicked.

Says she was knitting a sweater and when her mother said she was going out she said she would go over to Aunt Jo's and have her show her how to turn the shoulder of the sweater (Col. 3, page 10)

Her mother said

"Oh, you wait for me kid" (Col. 3, page 10)

Charlotte didn't wait but went to aunt's.

"Dan and I came home around 10 or so. I was tired and went to bed. Father was in bed, too. It must have been somewhere near midnight when father came to my room and said, 'Your mother isn't home yet, do you know where she went' or something like that." Charlotte mumbled something and her father went away. Charlotte thought in the morning her mother had stayed with one of her aunts and wasn't worried until late in the afternoon. Then her father looked worried too.

THIRTEENTH INSTALMENT
September 17, 1926.

Charlotte says that Mrs. Mills and Mr. Hall were "living in the same far apart relationship, I believe, as my mother and dad." (Bottom Col.1 page 10)

Tells of Mrs. Mills aiding Mr. Hall to change a tire on the way one afternoon to Bound Brook, Mrs. Hall not being with them and Mrs. Hall a few days later saying to Mrs. Mills "Well, you are getting

quite expert about the car now, aren't you."

Charlotte surmises from this that Mrs. Hall knew that Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills were often together and were happy together and therefore must have realized the truth of the situation.

Note: My guess is that Mr. Hall told Mrs. Hall of the tire repair and of many of his meetings with Mrs. Mills on the theory that it was the best policy to allay suspicion. The tire repair may be pure fake.

FOURTEENTH INSTALMENT
September 18, 1926.

Funeral of Mrs. Mills from undertakers because home too poorly equipped.

Mother was buried in choir vestments. Mother didn't fear death.

1922 Grand Jury attacked Charlotte.

Charlotte has only three confidantes among women: a girl friend, a married woman friend, and a newspaper writer.

Doesn't doubt Mrs. Hall suffered but compared with what the Mills went through four years ago and since she doesn't know what humiliation means.

FIFTEENTH INSTALMENT
September 20, 1926.

Praise of Simpson and Mrs. Gibson.

First investigation careless.

Isn't bitter towards slayers, but believes in capital punishment and wants law to take its course.

SIXTEENTH INSTALMENT
September 21, 1926.

Believes Mr. Hall had letters from Mrs. Mills in his study. (Doesn't say whether at church or home).

Shortly after tragedy people came to Mills home to search for letters written by Mr. Hall. Ransacked house with no result. A few minutes after they left Charlotte found "scores" of letters in crocheted bag hanging on wall where mother used to leave her coat. (Col. 1 page 14)

Took them upstairs, couldn't read them, hid them, planned to burn them, finally loaned them to a friendly woman lawyer who printed them.

First Charlotte knew of printing was when someone telephoned her aunt who telephoned Charlotte. Woman who borrowed letters later returned them and gave Charlotte a check made out to Jim Mills.

Charlotte "neally was terribly sorry for dad". For years one sickness in the family after another which kept him swamped.

SEVENTEENTH INSTALMENT
September 22, 1926

Charlotte's ideal man

This was last instalment.
